

# Cause remains the same

Oyster Roast may look different, but its mission hasn't changed

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**HIGH POINT**  
The annual High Point Oyster Roast, one of the city's most popular social events — and a critically important fundraiser for Family Service of the Piedmont — will look vastly different this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

It's also because of that pandemic, however, that this year's Oyster Roast may be more important than ever.

"We recognize we're in the midst of a global pandemic, which simultaneously requires us to do something different, but is just as much motivating the need for this event," said Kerr Ramsay, co-chairman of the 27th annual fundraiser.

"People being stuck at home has impacted the number of people who use Family Service services. Domestic abuse is up over the past year. Mortgage delinquencies are on the rise. Child abuse is up. Family Service has never been busier, so we need to continue raising money."

This year's event will be held March 5 on the new Congdon Yards facility on W. English Road. Rather than the traditional social gathering, though, this year's Oyster Roast will be a drive-through event called the High Point Oyster Roast Safe At Home Campaign.

Hosts and sponsors will come to Congdon Yards at an assigned time and be given a driving tour of the facility. They'll leave with a meal, provided by Pepper Moon



SPECIAL | HPE

Chris Wynne, left, and Kerr Ramsay are the co-chairs of this year's High Point Oyster Roast, which will be held March 5 at the new Congdon Yards facility on W. English Road. The annual fundraiser will benefit Family Service of the Piedmont.



SPECIAL | HPE

Raffle tickets are being sold for a chance to win this 14-karat white gold and diamond bangle bracelet, valued at approximately \$7,000.

Catering, consisting of a shrimp boil (shrimp, corn and potatoes), as well as a roll and dessert.

"Visitors will be able to come and see from their vehicles the entirety of the new Congdon Yards campus," Ramsay said. "And we'll have some exciting surprises for people during the event."

According to Ramsay, who serves on the Family Service board, the issues the organization addresses — domestic violence, child abuse, mental health and financial stability — have been worsened by the economic struggle

and isolation created by the pandemic over the past year.

"It's so important for people to understand how the pandemic has impacted people," he said.

"I think we've all been feeling additional stress and anxiety, not just from being confined, but from not knowing when the end of this is coming. But it's had such a negative impact on the people who were already the most in need. We're seeing people act in ways they haven't acted before."

For example, calls to the agency's crisis line are involving situations that are more

complex, intense and higher risk, according to Family Service staff. The number of domestic violence homicides in Guilford County is up 250% from last year, and child abuse cases are up 70%.

"That's why our services are so important," Ramsay said. "Family Service has not stopped — the staff continues to do the things they need to do to make sure families get the help they need."

Last year's Oyster Roast, which was one of the city's last public events before the pandemic began shutting things down, raised approximately \$215,000 for Family Service of the Piedmont.

"This is by far the single most important fundraising event for the Family Service's High Point foundation," Ramsay said.

"The majority of the budget for the High Point foundation, in terms of fundraising, comes through this event. Without a successful Oyster Roast, Family Service won't be able to fulfill its mission for the year. We're disappointed to

## WANT TO GO?

The 27th annual High Point Oyster Roast, a fundraiser for Family Service of the Piedmont, will be held March 5, from 5:30 to 8 p.m., at Congdon Yards, 410 W. English Road.

Rather than the traditional social gathering, this year's Oyster Roast will be a drive-through event called the High Point Oyster Roast Safe At Home Campaign. Hosts and sponsors will be assigned a window of time during which they will follow a driving route giving them a tour of Congdon Yards, and they will leave with a meal provided by Pepper Moon Catering. The meal will feature a shrimp boil (shrimp, corn and potatoes), as well as a roll and dessert.

Host and sponsor prices range from \$135 to \$10,000, depending on the level you choose. The deadline to sign up is Feb. 25.

Raffle tickets are also being sold for a 14-karat white gold and diamond bangle bracelet, donated by High Point Jewelers and valued at approximately \$7,000. The tickets cost \$20 apiece or three for \$50.

For more information, or to sign up as a host or sponsor, or to purchase raffle tickets, visit [oysterroast.info](http://oysterroast.info).

lose some of the social aspects of the event, but we're as motivated as ever to raise the money that Family Service needs to help the individuals and families that are in need."

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